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JAPAN THE EMPEROR SYSTEM AND THE TREATMENT OF ALIEN RESIDENTS

Leaders of churches in four North-East Asian countries - Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong - met with staff members of the Christian Conference of Asia in Kyoto, Japan, from October 12-16, 1987, in order to strengthen ties, and discuss issues relating to partnership, sharing of resources, and human rights and democratization in Asia.

The issues surrounding and incorporated within the emperor system as well as the treatment of alien residents in Japan, were considered to be of such import that the church leaders present created the following resolution.

Japan colonized Korea and waged wars of invasion against many of the nations in Asia, destroying about 20 million precious lives and bringing undescrivable misery and suffering to all peoples in these areas.

At the same time, the Japanese political leaders, in the name of national interest, led five million Japanese people to their deaths and brought national tragedy upon their own country.

Japan is not only unwilling to recognize the wrongs of these wars of invasion but it also refuses to accept responsibility for the problems of Koreans in Japan which are a direct result of Japanese colonial policy.

Moreover, the Japanese government is forcibly taking the fingerprints of Koreans in Japan and developing a unique policy of

discrimination, assimilation, and/or deportation while generally oppressing the Korean people who remain in Japan.

We, the participants in the Christian Conference of Asia/North-East Asian Church Leaders' Meeting, condemn the inhumane treatment of Koreans in Japan. We demand that the Japanese government assume its responsibility to the Koreans in Japan, the victims of Japan's past colonial policy, by carrying out the following reforms:

1. Abolish immediately the fingerprint system in the Alien Registration Law.
2. Cancel immediately retaliatory actions against fingerprint refusers such as the denial of re-entry permits and the shortening of resident periods.
3. Act speedily on the fundamental reform of the Alien Registration Law so that Koreans and other Alien residents may enjoy equal rights with Japanese nationals.

Closely connected to this issue and to many other human rights issues in Japan is the question of the emperor system.

Throughout human history the relationships between the ruler and the ruled have undergone many changes. In recent centuries there has been a shift from absolute monarchy to more democratic and participatory political systems.

The end of the Pacific War was marked by two events which had a great bearing on the political future of the Japanese people. The first was that the Emperor (Tenno), previously considered god-man, became human. The emperor system thereby seemed to be de-mythologized.

As Asians from neighboring countries we do

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not wish to dispute with the Japanese about their affection and respect for their Tenno. However, we cannot refrain from reminding the Japanese about what the emperor system historically has implied.

The concept of an unbroken genealogy of a Japanese imperial family, far superior to all the ruling families of the world, and the idea of the Emperor ruling the whole world as one household under him, results in a military ideology which encourages aggression. The emperor system also justified internal oppression and discrimination against minority ethnic groups.

Externally the emperor system justified exploitation and military aggression against Asian neighbors. In the Emperor's name countless numbers of Asian lives have been mercilessly destroyed and countless other crimes have been committed.

This is not only a matter of history, however. Current political tendencies have also aroused our concern.

These are:

- a) The revival of Japanese militaristic sentiment and the process of Japanese rearmament;
- b) The text book controversy involving the intentional alteration of the attribution of war-guilt; and,
- c) Signs of the Emperor again being mythologized.

As Asians we believe that when the Japanese nation commits itself to aggression in the name of the Emperor it is the Emperor who is accountable to the Asian people.

Furthermore, we affirm our conviction that the Japanese nation must acknowledge its war guilt as something intrinsically interwoven with the Japanese emperor system.

We applaud the conviction of Japanese Christians and the many people of good will who have confessed their collective war guilt and their recognition of the implication of the emperor system in that guilt. We also acknowledge their struggle to humanize Japanese society by humanizing the emperor system.

We pledge our support of their efforts to continue in God's mission in Japanese history.

(Press Release - Christian Conference of Asia)

NCC/J MISSION CONSULTATION

Reporter: Rutsuko Shoji

The National Christian Council in Japan (NCC/J) held its mission consultation on September 21 and 22 in Tokyo. This consultation was inaugurated to discuss a possible theme for the work of the NCCJ for the next three years and to bring about appropriate measure to meet the aims of said organization. The program consisted largely of various speakers who continue to work among the people in a number of ecumenical communities.

Representing voices from the Christian joint action work in the Kamagasaki area were Father Noboru Susukida, Catholic; voices from Okinawa were represented by the Rev. Saneaki Nakamura, Anglican Bishop of Okinawa; and voices from the periphery of Japanese society were represented by the Rev. Nobuo Kaino, of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan); with these three challenging the participants with the issues that they brought.

Father Susukida said that as far as the day laborers in Kamagasaki are concerned, Christians who are working to relieve the pain and suffering of life are simply called Christians. But with the advent of baptisms, Christians divide themselves into different denominations and orders for purposes of worship and interaction. He concluded by indicating that the divisions in the churches detract heavily from the work of the spirit and from the work of mission.

Bishop Nakamura focused on the emperor system today, indicating that it is no different from the emperor system of the FUMIEI (treading on a likeness of Mary in order to prove that one is not a Chris-

tian) past as Japanese Christians were subjected to this kind of loyalty test in the not-too-distant past. He indicated that Japanese Christians are constrained into being narrow minded believers who are more suitable to the purposes of the emperor system and only when this compliance is ensured is there a certain variety of limited freedom forthcoming as state guaranteed human rights.

Rev. Kaino dealt with the ecumenical fellowship which has been established by and through Koreans in Japan, who in their continuing struggle for humanity and justice labor and cooperate with each other over and above the boundaries of separated churches. He indicated that it also requires much more time to extend such ecumenical rapport to the entire church congregation.

The second day began with presentations from four NCC/J committee representatives: Akihiko Yahata (Youth), Masako Hayami (NCC/J Women's Committee), Soni Park (Korean Church Women in Japan), and the Rev. Masaru Aoki, (Handicapped People and the Church Committee).

In dealing with his involvement in the movement opposing the Alien Registration Laws of Japan, Mr. Yahata spoke on the difficulties encountered in the youth movements in the churches.

Ms. Hayami interpreted the WORLD DAY OF PRAYER movement and the 50 years of ecumenical movement work among women and raised a voice against discrimination practiced against women in the church.

Ms. Park discussed the continuing efforts brought in support of fingerprint refusers and in opposition to the government's revisions of the Alien Registration Law.

Rev. Aoki indicated that the churches are not including the handicapped in their programs and appealed for the creation of a "good news" which all can share on an equal level rather than in a separated handicapped environment in which handicapped people are shunted to the side in an apologetic manner.

The third presentations were by the leaders of NCC member churches: the Rev. Hiro-

kichi Nagao of the Japan Lutheran Church, the Rev. Osamu Matsukura of the Japan Baptist Convention, and Mr. Kaname Takado of the Christian Literature Associations.

Each dealt with expectations that the various participant organizations have in regard to the work of the NCC/J. In particular Mr. Takado illustrated the footsteps taken by the NCCJ and emphasized the fact that the NCCJ is an important core organization around which new theologies are established within present difficult social situations and within the context of an honest understanding of Japan's war responsibilities vis-a-vis other Asian nations and peoples.

Discussions focused in particular on the emperor system not only in regards to ideology but also on the implications of the continued reality of said system as it impinges in upon daily living.

The themes of, and the strategies used by the NCC/J, remain open to further discussion.

IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS BLOCK RETURN OF COLLEGE TEACHER

At 8:40 P.M., when 28 students from Shikoku Christian College (SCC) of Zentsuji City, returned to Japan from a month of study and exchange in the United States, they were dismayed to be stripped of their faculty leader at the airport office of the Osaka Immigration Office.

Despite the existence of a valid multiple-entry visa, Dr. Harry Altman, 46, an American teaching science at SCC for 13 years, was denied routine re-entry into Japan, and detained for questioning.

His visa was cancelled by order of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Japan. No reason was given in spite of inquiry. He was offered a 1-year residence permit (the visa specified a 3 year permit) IF he would write a statement agreeing "to obey the laws of Japan."

When the immigration official offered his personal opinion that the action which he was duty-bound to carry out was the result of Dr. Altman's fingerprint refusal (October, 1985), he could give no explanation for the fact that no notice of cancellation was given during the two years that had elapsed, nor had any accusation or criminal charges been made.

"The current Japanese Alien Registration Laws are legalized discrimination, showing disregard for the basic human rights of non-Japanese living in Japan", says Dr. Altman. "This law violates not only the United Nations Human Rights Treaty which Japan has ratified, but also the Japan-US Commerce and Navigation Friendship Treaty and the Japanese Constitution. I hope that Japan will someday be able to treat all persons equally, regardless of nationality, race, or birth. As Japan seeks its place in the sun, it must not forget those on whom its shadow falls."

"Problems of discrimination are not unknown in the U.S." Dr. Altman admitted. "One of the purposes of this study tour was for my Japanese students to experience the multi-racial character of the U.S. They had home-stays and made friends with Americans with roots in Europe, China, Japan, Africa, Korea, Jamaica, and India, and learned the broad meanings encompassed by the word 'American'. There are positive aspects to a multi-cultural community as well as racial problems to be overcome. Variety in background yields variety of thought and custom, with more freedom of expression and tolerance of differences in others. These are the qualities of true internationalism that is an important aim for the students."

Normally a laboratory-oriented scientist rather than a social activist, Dr. Altman resorted to civil disobedience in October 1985 only after considerable efforts, although producing a resolution from his City Council opposing the Alien Registration Law (ARL), failed to eliminate the stigmatic fingerprinting requirement.

He joined nine ministers from seven countries in a 100-hour fast against fingerprinting in September 1986. He has lectured widely in the US, Japan, and Korea on comparative culture and international

understanding.

Persuaded that further resistance at this point would not be productive, and pressured by the knowledge that more than 200 students' education depended on his return to SCC for classes which resumed October 1, Dr. Altman wrote "I hereby agree to obey the laws of Japan including the Japanese Constitution. I hope that Japan will obey the treaties it has ratified." and was admitted into Japan after some hesitation concerning the second sentence.

A crowd of friends and supporters joyfully greeted him as he emerged from immigration. "I am grateful to have the support of my colleagues and my church", Dr. Altman stated.

It has been recognized in court by a judge that fingerprinting is a very personal thing, "a humiliating experience that would be contrary to the Japanese constitution if it were not essential for identification." Yet many countries NOT requiring fingerprints show that fingerprinting is not essential. It remains as an unconstitutional offense that should be eliminated.

FROM 'THE RE-ENTRY PERMIT' TO 'THE OMURA DETENTION CENTER'

(Statement upon ending my hunger strike)
By Ronald Susumu Fujiyoshi

September 29, 1987

Today is the 25th day of my hunger strike. Although I still have not been granted a "re-entry permit" or something comparable, I have decided to end my hunger strike. I have lost close to ten kilograms (22 lbs.) and my body has become considerably weaker. My goal was never to wreck my health but to obtain a re-entry permit as well as to protest the unfair actions of the Ministry of Justice.

The Omura Detention Center

I want to explain why I chose the Omura Detention Center in Nagasaki prefecture as

the place where I would end my fast. The specific reason is due to the inhuman action of the Osaka immigration authorities who on September 24 took Mr. Park Sun Jo directly from Kakogawa Prison in Hyogo Prefecture to the Omura Detention Center.

Mr. Park's two sons, who are in their first and second years in high school, were led to believe that they could meet their father at the Osaka Immigration Office and they therefore left school early to arrive at the immigration office. Without considering the feelings of these sons, Mr. Park was whisked off to Omura which is about six hours away by train.

Mr. Eguchi of the Osaka Immigration Office laughingly said to the crest-fallen sons, "You can go to Omura to see your father."

Mr. Park Sun Jo

Mr. Park is a 65 year old Korean who came to Japan when he was 11 years old. He acquired residence status under the R.O.K.-Japan Normalization Treaty of 1965. After receiving a re-entry permit in 1979, he went to Korea to invest in a golf range. Due to unusual circumstances he became involved in a court suit which prohibited his returning to Japan within the year. During this time, his re-entry permit expired and his residence status was cancelled. Without any other recourse he returned to Japan as an "illegal immigrant" in 1980. He was caught and placed in the Omura Detention Center in 1981, where he lived for five months.

Through my work with illegal immigrants in the Ikuno ward of Osaka, I began to see the contradictions within the Ministry of Justice. The Omura Detention Center is a symbol of fear for illegal immigrants. Only Koreans are placed in Omura. All other foreigners are placed in the Yokohama Detention Center where the food and facilities are better. In the Omura Center families are divided with only thirty minutes given per day to meet. Mr. Park explains the conditions of Omura in detail in his book, Korea-Japan-Omura Detention Center.

There is no need for an Omura today. A few years ago deportation was changed from a boat from Nagasaki to deportation by

airplane. The Osaka Immigration Office has cells to accommodate those arrested and because of the location, children, like Mr. Park's sons, and lawyers would have easier access up until the day of deportation.

A Second Look at the Re-entry Permit

By looking at the case of Mr. Park Sun Jo one can see more clearly the unstable legal position of long-term Asian foreigners in Japan. Mr. Park held Japanese nationality and resident status in Japan since he was 11 years old. Just because his re-entry permit good for one year expired, his status was erased as if he was merely a tourist to Japan.

The vast majority of long-term foreigners in Japan are Koreans of second and third generation status. Even having been born here, their resident status is not a right. Leaving Japan without a re-entry permit snuffs out their resident status. If they leave with a re-entry permit and don't return within a year, like Mr. Park, they lose their acquired status. By looking at the re-entry permit system one can see the lack of any concept of rights for foreigners in Japan and the fact of their fragile legal status.

I have had four friends who lived in the Omura Detention Center, one for almost three years. I wanted to see the Center with my own eyes and to focus our protest to the Ministry of Justice not only on the fingerprint and my re-entry permit, but upon the deeper issue of the lack of true rights for foreigners in Japan.

THE MISSION OF TODE DENDOSHO

by Kevin Uchida

Rev. Ichiro Okura greeted us at the bus stop in Tode 4-chome of Kawasaki. This is a residential area bordering the Tama river, primarily housing lower income, blue-collar laborers in this heavily industrialized city.

His first comment was for us to compare

the housing on both sides of the main road. On one side, that opposite the river, were apartment complexes, old and noticeably worn, but functional.

"That's the Japanese section", he told us. We crossed the road, "and this is the Korean section. The people living on opposite sides don't intermingle." The 'Korean' side consisted of a number of rusting, corrugated sheet-metal lined structures, spaced so closely to one another that on many of the paths between houses, groups had to walk single-file. In the event of fire, everything would burn because fire trucks would have no way to reach the blaze.

We walked from the road to the Kawasaki Tode Dendosho, which is located on state-owned land immediately adjacent the Tama river. Next door to the church was what used to be a house. It was washed away when the Tama overflowed, flooding the shore. The owner began rebuilding but the local authorities prevented him from doing so by erecting a steel-pipe barrier around the foundation. They told him that it was against the law to rebuild because he was a squatter.

There are about 400 people living in this section of Tode, approximately 200 Koreans, 200 Japanese, and a few Filipinos. Almost all the Japanese are single. Many of the Koreans, however, are families of up to three generations. Most people living here are day-laborers, working primarily for small businesses. They generally receive sub-minimal wages, little or no health benefits, and absolutely no job security. Rev. Okura told us that one day-laborer became sick last year, and starved to death in his shack before anyone found him. Another almost suffered the same fate but was discovered in time to be saved.

The Tode Dendosho was founded in 1976 by Rev. Hiroo Sekita. It began as a mission center and boarding house for male students. Rev. Sekita believed that "every human affair is related to the other structurally, and there is nothing beyond the social structure". Thus, the church, while seeking to nurture to the spiritual well-being of its constituents, cannot ignore the social and political framework

of which it is a part.

Rev. Okura became acting pastor of Tode the Dendosho in 1984. He and his family of three live there now. Since many of the older Koreans living in Tode 4-chome were first brought to Japan as forced labor during the Pacific War, there is still strong anti-Japanese sentiment among the residents, and Rev. Okura says that he would not have even been tolerated if it were not for his wife Kwang Ne Jeon, who is Korean. After three years, he is only beginning to be accepted by his neighbors, partly due to his efforts in tutoring some of the local children. Some have gained entrance into schools which their grade school teachers had told them they could never attend.

There are presently 41 members of the Tode Dendosho, most of whom are Japanese. All are dedicated to working towards reconciliation between the Japanese and Koreans. Most of the members do not live in Tode, but had heard of the church and its mission through others. There are, however, a few residents who are beginning to call Tode Dendosho their own. Rev. Okura is looking towards the day when it will truly be the church of Tode 4-chome.

The Tode Dendosho is recognized by the United Church of Christ (Kyodan), but is not financially supported, either in terms of salary or maintenance. The family supports itself and the church through tutoring and from the donations of the church members.

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Radiation from atomic power plants is no different from that produced by the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombs. It is difficult to believe that an accident will be seen only at Chernobyl. This land is constantly moving and concrete lives for only thirty years. Children, birds, dogs, cows, and horses are all in danger.
(Mrs.) Toshi Maruki
Maruki Art Museum of the Hiroshima Panels

CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

Peace, Justice, and Integrity of Creation
WCC Pacific Women's Consultation

Because of the unstable political situation on Fiji, the consultation (Sept. 21 to Oct. 1) was changed in location to Tongatapu (64,500 population), at the last minute.

Fifty women from fifteen countries attended this Pacific Women's Consultation. As a woman from a country sharing in the wealth of the Pacific Ocean I was invited to attend the meeting.

It was a fact finding trip for me. From 1962 to 1979, thirteen Pacific island countries had become independent while others remain trust territories of the United States and France. The Kingdom of Tonga belongs to the British Commonwealth and escaped from an invasion from Japan during the Pacific War.

The International Date Line is twisted and bent around in order to divide Tonga from Samoa and the Cook Islands. Even with a one hour and thirty minute flight between Tonga and American Samoa, Tonga is experiencing Monday while Samoa is celebrating Sunday.

Tonga's population has doubled in the last thirty years and with this doubling the limited amounts of land and water are major issues for the kingdom. One solution has been immigration to Australia, New Zealand, and the United States and these out-migrations are increasing more and more thereby breaking the extended family care system of village life.

Government sponsored family planning provides contraceptive injections every three months to young mothers with these medications being provided to families of people serving with the army and the police.

Other delegates to the conference indicated that the use of this injection based method of birth control is common practice in the Pacific and they all looked at me with distrust, for they knew that this

birth control chemical is not being used in Japan.

The meeting was carried on in English and French translation was provided for the delegates from Tahiti. Two delegates who had come with two translators presented the problems of French nuclear bomb testing on Mururoa in French Polynesia.

The delegate from Kiribati shared her experience of having visited Mururoa under French Government auspices. She explained that the surface of the island looked as if all were watching a peaceful picture from a beautiful motion picture, but when she cut herself accidentally she was not allowed to use ocean water to wash away the blood and cleanse the wound. She added that such an experience indicated the degree to which the water was thought to be unsafe.

The delegates from Tahiti indicated that the King of Tonga was used by the Pacific nation's media and newspapers in an attempt to prove the safety of nuclear testing in Mururoa. Soon after the King's statement on the safety of nuclear testing he was given a trip to France.

In small group discussions a Tonga woman shared her own experience of delivering a stillborn deformed baby. She also indicated first-hand knowledge of other problems related to new born babies. More women spoke out courageously as to how God's creation is in very deep trouble in relation to land, water, and air.

Not only did the delegates deal with problems of environmental pollution, they also pointed to divisions in families on the basis of differences in religious faiths.

One afternoon we took a trip around the Tongatapu Island and saw many new buildings that had been erected by the Mormons.

Other Pacific Island delegates said that on their islands also the same church buildings and school campuses are being built by the Mormons. At the headquarters of the Mormon Temple the presence of the Tonga national flag was being explained on the basis of the fact that the King of Tonga had attended the opening of the Mormon Temple.

Although I could not discover the reasons for the close relationships between religion and state there seems to be some connection between this phenomenon and land ownership, for foreigners are prohibited from owning land in Tonga.

The next day the king attended Sunday services at the Methodist Church with the other three hundred members of the congregation.

Soon after the conference started, short-wave radio news told of another political crisis in Fiji. The keynote speaker, Suliana Siwatibau, and another delegate, had to leave early when it was understood that their families were in danger.

Another political crisis kept a delegate from Belau (Palau) from attending the conference, for the delegate's father was killed by an assassin's bullet and the intensity of the political climate did not allow her to leave the country.

The two delegates from Solomon Islands spoke out again and again as to how the Japanese military had killed many many people and how the Japanese economic invasion continues to adversely effect the people of the islands, as problems such as wife beating, exodus of young people into towns away from farming and fishing, the breakdown of marriage and the family, and a very great increase in suicides, continue to be exacerbated by the Japanese presence.

Even though the Solomon Islands became independent in 1978, the Japanese are still coming to build expensive war memorials and monuments that occupy the precious land. Japanese tuna fish canning industries have taken over the land competing with Taiwan and Korean fishing, farming, and logging.

On the day when we said farewell the people of the islands said with a friendly smile, "Please do not forget us! We remember you as our friend. Find out more about Japanese Government aid which can be used by the people of the islands."

The beautiful island of Tonga is full of God's blessings as it reminded us of the creation story in the Book of Genesis when

God created everything and God said it is very good.

At the end of the twentieth century the rhythm of God's creation has been disturbed and the pounding waves of God's world are out of tune and have lost balance with all things.

The women of the conference and of the islands affirm that the earth does not belong to people but people belong to the earth. (Aiko Carter)

POETRY FOR MEDITATION

By Terepai Noorua
Cook Islands Christian Church

If souls can suffer alongside,
And I hardly know it
Because the spirit of discernment
is not in me,
Then I know nothing of Calvary Love.

If I refuse to allow one who is
dear to me
To suffer for the sake of Christ,
If I do not see such suffering
as the greatest honor
That can be offered to any
follower of the crucified,
Then I know nothing of Calvary Love.

If I am content to heal a hurt slightly
Saying Peace, Peace,
where there is no peace.
If I forget the poignant word,
Let love be without dissimulation,
And blunt the edge of truth
Speaking not right things
But smooth things,
Then I know nothing of Calvary Love.

If I am perturbed by the reproach
and misunderstanding
That may follow action taken
for the good of souls
For whom I must give account,
If I cannot commit the matter and
and go on in peace and in silence
Remembering Gethsemane and the Cross,
Then I know nothing of Calvary Love.

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